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24 September 2004

RUS42837.E

Russia: Treatment of the Khakass community, including of members who are in relationships with Russians, in Abakan, Khakassia; whether protection is available (2001 to 2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

A senior anthropologist at the Russian Academy of Science (RAS) based in Moscow has indicated in correspondence to the Research Directorate, that Khakass, a Turkic ethnic group, are the largest minority within the Khakassia Republic (11 Sept. 2004). They comprise approximately nine to ten per cent of the whole population of Khakassia (RAS 11 Sept. 2004). However, other sources, citing the 1989 Soviet census, reported that Khakass make up 11.1 per cent of the population of Khakassia (Borgoiakova Apr. 2002; Siberian Federal District 1 Jan. 2002). Further, 62 per cent of the Khakass live in Khakassia (Borgoiakova Apr. 2002).

Treatment of Khakass and protection

Khakass belong to a minority that defines itself religiously as Shamanist (Carter 2001, 53). In an article published in 2002 in the *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, Andrei Vinogradov, from the University of Saskatchewan, reported a revival of Shamanism in Southern Siberian, including in Khakassia, since 1991.

On the linguistic front, in a lecture at the World Congress on Language Policies that took place in Barcelona in April 2002, Tamara Borgoiakova, from the Khakass State University, stated that

[d]uring the last decade [1992-2002] opportunities to learn the Khakass language at school [have] improved. Today [in 2002], for example, 35% of Kakhass schoolchildren learn their native language as a subject at municipal schools in Abakan.

This information is corroborated by a senior anthropologist at the Russian Academy of Science who stated that to "the best of [his] knowledge" and based on results of ethno-sociological surveys, Khakass did not encounter any difficulty in learning their own language at school (11 Sept. 2004). The anthropologist also mentioned that instruction in the native language of the Khakass was also available at the university in Abakan (RAS 11 Sept. 2004).

In the social sphere, Khakass occupy high-level official positions (ibid.). For example, the entire staff of the Institute of Language, Literature and History in Abakan, Khakassia is Khakass (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

No information could be found on the protection available to Khakass among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Treatment of mixed Russian/Khakass and protection

Regarding the treatment of mixed Russian/Khakass in Khakassia, the Dean of the Political Science and Law Faculty of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), who is an expert on ex-Soviet Union States, indicated in correspondence to the Research Directorate that he is not aware of any specific discrimination that people of mixed Russian-Khakass origin could face in Khakassia (8 Sept. 2004).

Further, a member of the Russian Academy of Science (RAS) indicated that in Khakassia, approximately 20 to 25 per cent marriages are mixed and include one Khakass and a person of other ethnic background (11 Sept. 2004).

The anthropologist indicated that the majority of these mixed couples could be found in the city of Abakan

and enjoyed a life similar to that of all other Russian citizens, since they all enjoyed the same rights and faced the same problems (RAS 11 Sept. 2004). Additional information on the situation of mixed Russian-Khakass living in Abakan could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

No information on protection available to mixed Russian-Khakass could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Anthropology of East Europe Review [Chigaco] 2002. Vol. 20, No. 2. Andrei Vinogradov. "The Role and Development of Shamanistic Discourse among Southern Siberian Ethnic Groups in the Post-Soviet Period." <http://condor.depaul.edu/~rrotenbe/aeer/aeer20_2.html> [7 Sept. 2004]

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Russian Academy of Science. (RAS), Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Moscow. 11 September 2004. Correspondence from a senior anthropologist and Head of the Department of the Peoples of the North and Siberia.

Siberian Federal District. 1 January 2002. "Republic of Khakassia: Key Facts." <<http://www.sfd.ru/sfd/ne/eng/rkhak/menu1.htm>> [Accessed 7 Sept.2004]

Université du Québec à Montréal. 8 September 2004. Correspondence with the Dean, Political Science and Law Faculty.

Additional Sources Consulted

Publications: Amnesty International (AI). 2003. *Discrimination on Grounds of Race in the Russian Federation*. Gorenburg, Dmitry P. 2003. *Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Internet sites including: EurasiaNet, European Centre for Minority Rights, European Commission, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, International Helsinki Federation, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Minorities at Risk, Minority Electronic Resources, Minorities Rights Group, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

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